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ABSTRACT

The role of the county Extension Leader in recommending members for the County Agricultural Extension Committee is discussed from the standpoint of principles and procedures involved in identifying, selecting, orienting, training, utilizing, recognizing, and evaluating leaders. Two techniques for identifying potential leaders are the reputational and the decision analysis techniques, and their modifications. The Extension Leader should recommend for the committee persons who will balance the board in terms of age, sex, interests, capabilities, and geographic location. Orientation should be on an individual basis and be brief and informal. It is believed that training of committee members is best accomplished by their participation in four meetings held annually. The Extension Staff must work at utilizing the county committee, and recognition of committee members should be part of the routine of committee work. A chart is provided that may be used by the Extension Leader to evaluate the effectiveness of the committee. It is concluded that a functioning and well-utilized committee can help in informing the general public about Extension's organization, purposes, and accomplishments. A brief bibliography is provided. (DB)

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND THE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION COMMITTEE

A Research Paper

Presented to

Dr. C. E. Carter

In Partial Fulfillment

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Agricultural Extension 5120

By

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND THE COUNTY AGRICULTUIAL EXTENSION COMMITTEE

The Tennessee Agricultural Extension Committee act was passed by the Tennessee legislature and became law March 11, 1955. Briefly it states that all counties cooperating with the State Agricultural Extension Service that make an appropriation for extension work shall elect an Agricultural Extension Committee. This committee shall be composed of seven members. It will be elected by the County Court. Three members shall be from the membership of the county court while four shall not be members of the court. The four non-court members shall be composed of two farmers and two farm women and shall reside in different civil districts. If there are fewer than four civil districts in a county at least one member shall come from each district. No member may be elected for more than three successive terms. Functions of the committee shall be (1)to act with duly authorized representatives of the State Agricultural Extension Service in employment and/or removal of extension personnel receiving funds from the county,(2)to act with authorized representatives of the State Extension Service in formulating the county budget and to serve as liason between the Extension Service and the County Court, (3)to act in an advisory capacity on county extension program formulation nd (4)to act in an advisory capacity on activities performed in connection with carrying out the program. The Act further states that the committee in performing these functions will meet with duly authorized representatives of the Extension Service

during the months of February, May, August and November.[1]

A study of job descriptions shows that the Extension Leader has assumed the responsibility of liason with the County Agricultural Extension Committee.[2] Reports from counties indicate that the degree to which provisions of the law are carried out covers a wide range. Some committees seldom meet except to hire new personnel while others more nearly fulfil the intent of the law.Committees across the state likely more adequately perform functions one and two as outlined in the previous paragraph than functions three and four. The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into the manner that the leadership development process can be used in working with and utilizing the potential of the County Agricultural Committee.

The paper will be organized around the principles and procedures involved in identifying, selecting, orienting, training, utilizing, recognizing and evaluating leaders.

IDENTIFICATION

The Agricultural Committee by law is elected by the County Court. This at first thought would seem to limit the degree to which Extension could identify potential agricultural committee members. In practice however the county judge or other appointing authority ordinarily recommends certain nominees to the court. Usually he confers with the Extension Leader concerning persons who could

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[1] Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, Tennessee Extension Workers Handbook, Univ of Tenn, 1962, p. 59.
[2] Study of County Extension Staff job descriptions.

competently serve as agricultural committee members. This is a desireable situation and the Extension Leader should function in such a manner as to be perceived by county leaders as one who can recommend suitable and capable persons for the agriculture committee as well as other county and area leadership positions. This means that the Extension Leader and other staff members must be aware of the leadership in their county. Knowing the present seven committee members us obviously no problem, however, identifying potential committee members can be a problem. Two research methods that have proven effective in determining community power structure can be modified for use in identifying potential leaders.

Nunnery and Kimbrough discuss these two techniques. The first is the reputational technique. Use of this technique includes four steps--(1)persons who are at the center of community activities are asked to provide lists of persons of prominence in the institutional sectors of the community. Business, government, education and religion are usually the four areas used but agriculture could also be added, (2)a panel of knowledgeable persons is asked to rank these persons as they perceive them in order of influence. Then a final list is compiled consisting of those persons the panel of judges acting independently agree are the most prominent leaders on the list, (3)in-depth interviews are conducted with these listed prominent persons. They are asked to provide information concerning key issues in the community

with particular emphasis on the four or five areas selected for study and more particularly who the decision makers are in the areas selected, (4)the data is organized and interpreted to provide a description of the power structure of the community.

A second research method used is the decision analysis technique. It involves three steps--(1)several decision areas (for example, education, agriculture, community health, zoning) are selected. Persons representative of these areas are asked to identify the most important decisions made in these areas in recent years, (2)as much information as possible is obtained about these decisions. Newspapers, personal interviews, observations etc. are used to obtain this information. The mass of data is analyzed to determine who the decision makers are, the pattern of decision making etc., (3)the nature of the power structure of the community is described based on this analysis.

Considerable difference of opinion exists as to which of these techniques is the better. Nunnery and Kimbrough and others are of the opinion that the two techniques may be combined to give a more accurate description.[3]

These methods are designed to be used by outside researchers and obviously neither of these two techniques can be used in a formal manner by members of a county extension staff. Such an attempt would lead to lack of cooperation by those he attempted to interview and would likely jeopardize

[3]Michael Nunnery and Ralph B. Kimbrough, Politics, Power, Polls and School Elections (Berkeley: McCutchan Pub. Co., 1971).

the staff member's position.

Modification of these techniques can be applied, however, in an informal way, In fact extension workers have probably always employed similar techniques informally. The following suggestions are made relateve to informal application of the two techniques--(1)learn the current problems, issues and decisions as well as significant problems, issues or decisions that have existed in the past few years. This can be done by informal contacts throughout the community. In an informal and positive manner people like to talk about their community, (2)record and piece together in some manner important information learned. Relationships between various people, organizations and institutions are particularly important. Local newspapers and organization lists (particularly leaders of organizations) are significant. A file folder or other means of recording such information is important, (3)be a part of the action. Participate in community activities. Such part icipation in addition to fulfilling the role of a good citizen also permits one to further knowledge concerning decision makers and leaders in the community, (4)based on the preceding three steps develop a list of potential committee members. The list should be expanded to include potential leaders for other purposes, for example, 4-H leaders and resource development leaders.[4]

A word of caution. One should pursue the preceding

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[4]Ibid., pp. 27-30.

because he honestly feels it will help him do a more effective job and render greater service to the community. Identifying and effectively utilizing community leadership certainly accomplishes this. We are not discussing volunteer leaders as such but Schindler-Rainman's and Lippitt's statement in in which they conclude that the individual volunteer needs volunteering just as much as the community needs him seems applicable.[5] If extension can be responsible for placing an individual in a position whereby he grows toward his potential and accomplishes personal goals; is this not the zenith of developing people?

In summary county Extension Leaders should conduct themselves in such a manner that county leaders will perceive them as the major possessor of knowledge concerning persons who would in a satisfactory manner carry out the duties of an Agricultural Extension Committee Member. The Extension Leader should adopt a modification of the reputational and decision analysis techniques as outlined above. Modifications of these techniques can also be used by other staff members for determining potential leaders for other extension organizations.

SELECTION

Selection is finalized by vote of the county court. In

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[5]Eva Schindler-Rainman and Ronald Lippitt, The Volunteer Community (Washington, D. C.: Center for a Volunteer Society, 1971), p. 15.

practice the county judge or other appointing authority recommends certain individuals and the Extension Leader is normally asked to recommend persons for the committee. The Extension Leader should usually recommend more than one person. This allows the appointing authority to utilize his own knowledge and satisfy his own personal needs relative to the selection. The Extension Leader should be aware of the county situation to the extent that he will not recommend someone that for some reason he knows the appointing authority will reject.

Considerations to keep in mind when selecting committee members include--

1. Which individuals have an interest in the kinds of activities in which the committee will be engaged?
2. Who has knowledge, skill, or access to information that will be of use to the committee?
3. Are there persons who might develop a greater sense of commitment to the organization by working on the committee?
4. Are there some individuals who will work together more compatibly than others?[6]

Knowles points out that care must be taken to select members who not only represent something, but who will be effective. Personal qualities that should be kept in mind in selecting committee members include--

1. Interest in the program and its objectives.
2. Willingness to serve.

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[6]Sheldon G. Lowry, Committees, a key to group leadership (Ohio State University: NCRS-5 Leadership Series No.1,1965) n. p.

3. Competence for the work of the committee.
4. Availability for the work, in terms of health, time etc.
5. Ability to work with other committee members.
6. Position of influence with significant elements of the community. [7]

Houle in discussing who should be on a board lists considerations as far as representation is concerned. These include--important elements in the clientele, sex, age, special capabilities needed on the board, location of residence, and relative experience in board processes. However there are some potential board members that can not be fitted into slots. Houle mentions the Arabian proverb which holds that mankind is divided into three classes--those who are immovable, those who are movable, and those who move. Irregardless of other considerations a board must contain people who move.

Selecting a new board member is really like adding a new ingredient to a recipe. Each board has a personality of its own and its nature is altered with the addition of new members; it puts a complex human being into interaction with a complex social entity. An important consideration in looking at potential new board members is to look at the present composition of the board and determine in terms of desired representation the type of member needed to balance the board.

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[7]Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (New York:Association Press, 1970) p. 70.

A board can be no better than its members. The major choice should be made in terms of those who are right for a particular board, who can strengthen it, and give it what it needs. Human beings are capable of continuous intellectual growth. We should take advantage of this fact and leave neither the choice of board members or their increased knowledge to chance.[8]

Quoting from A People and a Spirit "Extension has a demonstrated capability to associate with and use the existing local power structure. It has developed a high degree of empathy with those it serves."

A further quote "Extension's close ties with existing local power structure sometimes raise questions about its ability to mount new programs which may impose change upon the activities and attitudes of agencies within these power structures."[9]

Both these statements have implications for Extension staffs when considering recommendations for new committee members.

In summary the Extension Leader should from his broad base of knowledge of potential leaders recommend for selection persons who will balance the present board in terms of age, sex, interests, capabilities and geographic location. An important consideration is selection of committee members who represent the various aspects of extension programs being conducted in the county. Certainly the four broad program areas of agricultural production and marketing, home

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[8] Cyril O. Houle, The Effective Board (New York: Association Press, 1960) pp. 25-29.

[9] Report of the Joint USDA-NASULGC Extension Study Committee, A People and a Spirit (Fort Collins: Colorado State University, 1968) p. 41.

economics, 4-H, and community development should be considered in selecting committee members. It seems wise to have members with a working knowledge in each program area. Counties emphasizing programs such as urban horticulture, low-income etc. should consider committee members who can represent innovative thinking in these areas as well as visualizing the emphasis program as a part of the total extension effort. The Extension Leader should remember that it is the county court's responsibility to elect the members and recommend several suitable persons to the appointing authority rather than one. The appointing authority and county court should perceive themselves as making the selection. They should also advise the prospective committee member that his name will be submitted to the court and ascertain his willingness to serve.

ORIENTATION

We assume that the selection authority informs the new member that he has been elected as a new committee member. In many cases probably all he will know is the fact that he has been elected to the county agricultural committee. Then it becomes the responsibility of someone to orient the new member. Ideally this should be done by the committee chairman. The Extension Leader in his role as liason with the committee should consider himself responsible to see that the new member is oriented. Such orientation should include purpose of the committee, specific duties and responsibilities

of the committee, committee member's names and addresses and time and types of meetings. The Extension Leader can best perform this function on an individual basis with each new member. Ideally he should be the resource person to supply the committee chairman with information and materials to accomplish the orientation purpose. In practice he will likely perform the service along with the chairman or by himself with the consent of the chariman. In any case it should be an individual contact and should be brief and to the point. Verbal instruction is likely best supplemented by a brief to the point one or two page mimeo listing purpose of the committee, specific duties and responsibilities of the committee, type and time of meetings, names and addresses of committee members, and names, titles and addresses of the Extension staff. Perhaps such a mimeo could be developed by the county staff. It could be discussed with the committee and modified for use for orientation with new members. This would give the committee chairman an instrument to use in orienting new members and at the same time place the Extension Leader in the role of assisting the chairman.

Heckel states that the relationship existing between the professional and lay leader will have a substantial effect on the degree to which the local leader will participate. Clarification of role is the key to a satisfactory relationship. The lay leader should have clearly in mind what he can contribute and what he can expect from the

professional worker.[10]

Lowry says a well instructed committee should know name of committee, type of committee, purpose, specific duties and responsibilities, (no committee has responsibilities that are not specifically given to it) chairman's name, committee members, time and types of reports, budget, and details concerning coordination with other committees.[11]

In summary orientation should include purpose of the committee, type, frequency and time of meetings, names and addresses of committee members, and names and addresses of the Extension Staff. Ideally this should be done by the chairman but the Extension Leader should see that it is done. Orientation should be done on an and individual basis and should be brief and informal. A major part of orientation is conveying to the new committee member a feeling of importance relative to his new position and confidence in his ability to fulfil the role.

TRAINING

Hare points out that effectiveness of the leader can generally be improved by giving him training which fits him specifically for the type group he is to lead. In experimental training programs, youth leaders have become more democratic, foremen have gained more acceptance from employees in introducing work changes, and college students

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[10] Maynard C. Heckel, "Leader Development Through Planning," Journal Cooperative Extension, Summer 1965, pp. 87-94.

[11] Lowry, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

have improved their discussion leadership techniques.[12]

Lowry states that the relationship between motivation and satisfaction with one's work is well known. It can be shown that satisfaction generally increases with increased understanding of one's role. Blount and Beal found that the groups with the highest understanding of their goals, means of accomplishing goals and authority had gone through three stages of communication and discussion (1)receiving information and asking questions for clarification; (2)evaluating and analyzing the elements presented; and (3) suggesting, rejecting, modifying, or developing their own ideas about the elements being considered.[13]

Kreitlow and others state their is something about a training meeting that makes me think of lions and dogs; to want to stay at home. The phrase training leaders is archaic and should be replaced with a term such as helping leaders. The leader needs help in knowledge, facts snd supporting materials relating to the job he is to perform. He needs perspective in how to evaluate results. Particularly a new leader will want to know "How am I doing." Research shows that the leader is most likely to evaluate his success based on response from members of the various groups he associates with.[14]

Training of the committee member can best be accomplished

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[12] A. Paul Hare, Handbook of Small Group Research (New York: The Free Press, 1968) p. 309.

[13] Lowry, op. cit., p. 1.

[14] Kreitlow, op. cit., pp. 136-138.

on an informal basis and can best be handled at the four regular meetings each year or through personal contacts or mail-outs. Leader skills, background information concerning the county and program planning procedures are some of the areas in which training should be conducted. Timely and appropriate mail-outs on each of these subjects can be used. At the four regular meetings the agents can discuss county background information and program planning procedures. Committee members can be used as members of program planning committees, to present recognition awards etc. and by so doing will learn by doing or "be trained by doing." This idea will be developed in the discussion of the utilization phase.

In summary training of agricultural committee members can best be accomplished by participating in the four meetings held annually. The extension staff should consciously present information or involve the committee in activities during these meetings that will cause the committee to learn by doing or participating. Leader skills, background information about the county and program planning procedures may be learned in this manner. Appropriate mail outs, using committee members on program planning committees and using committee members to tell the County Extension story are other ways of informal training. Formal training set up solely for the committee (other than that appropriate as a part of the four meetings held annually) is likely unnecessary.

UTILIZATION

Utilization of the county agricultural committee in an effective manner to further the Extension program and at the same time develop the potential of the individual committee member and the committee as a group is the most challenging phase of the committee development process.

Lowry states that effective committees can be one of the most important working forces of an organization. Particularly is this true if committee members are selected for the contribution they can make and are made to feel it is an honor and privilege to be asked to serve.[15]

Houle in considering why people accept appointment to school boards discussed McCarty's study of fift y two persons. McCarty divided these fifty two into groups in terms of what seemed to be their major motivation. His conclusions were--

Those who were extremely altruistic	10%
Those who were apparently altruistic	36%
Those who were partially self-interested	44%
Those who were extremely self-interested	10%

This data offers clues as to how to get, use, and keep effective people on an advisory board. Over half of the people accepted membership because of some type of self-interest. Then we need to think about why or what is there about advisory committee membership that meets the need of a person's self interest. Persons may accept appoint-

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[15]Lowry, op. cit.,p. 2.

ment to a committee for reasons of self-interest and later adopt a more altruistic view. Thus people must be utilized based on their interests and concerns.[16] It can be assumed that if the preceding selection and orientation phases have been carried out as outlined, the member will have an interest in the overall extension program with likely a major interest in some particular phase of the extension program.

The following procedure is suggested for utilization of the Agricultural Committee. Schedule as designated by law four meetings per year. Select for each meeting one major phase--agricultural production and marketing, home economics, 4-H, or resource development--for an in-depth discussion (30-40 minutes) related to progress, problems, planning and activities. This would allow each major area to be discussed each year. County personnel responsible for the particular area under discussion would develop and lead the discussion thus allowing the committee to interact with all staff members during a year's time. Timely comments might be made concerning other phases but the main focus would be on the one area. Assuming an hour and a half meeting this would allow forty to fifty minutes for other routine business connected with personnel, budgeting etc. to be discussed. This would permit the committee to carry out functions (3)to act in an advisory capacity on County Extension Program formulation and (4) to act in an advisory capacity on activities performed in connection with

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[16]Houle op. cit., pp. 18-49.

carrying out the program. Consideration should be given to making one of these four meetings a supper meeting. The Extension staff could host the committee at this meeting.

At this point the Extension Staff should face the task of clarifying the role of the committee relative to program formulation and program execution. It is the author's opinion that the county court Agricultural Committee should serve in an "umbrella" capacity in this regard. Details of program planning and execution should be left to program planning committees in the four broad program areas--agricultural production and marketing, home economics, 4-H, and resource development. In many cases program planning committees should study an even narrower area, for example, soybeans, swine, nutrition etc. County court committee members could be and it would be desireable for them to also be members of the appropriate planning committee corresponding with their interests.

Committee members may also be utilized to preside and/or present awards at county recognition meetings and tell the Extension story at civic meetings. They should also be fully utilized in the many factted approaches to program planning, execution and evaluation that are in line with their interests and capabilities.

Modifications of several of Dolan's motivational techniques to keep 4-H leaders working may be used to maintain motivation in agricultural committee members. Included are

talk about the program of the agricultural Extension Service when you are with leaders. Imply its importance by your interest. Many times we become our own worst enemies by creating an impression of downgrading or de-emphasizing the importance of what we are doing. We prefer to be identified with programs and causes that have dynamic leadership. Can we expect the agricultural committee or the public in general to be any different?

Appeal to leader's personal growth needs when possible. Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs is very helpful in providing insight in this regard.[17]

Heckel says when the professional first begins working with a lay planning group he may find it necessary to assume the major responsibility for programming. He must be cautious that he does not lose sight of the direction in which he desires to move the committee in terms of its development or in terms of development of potential leadership. A professional may get so much personal satisfaction in a dominant leadership role that he will become self satisfied and find it difficult to develop a two way working relationship with lay leaders. As a program planning group matures in its ability to make meaningful decisions the leadership of the professional worker is strengthened. He will be expected to provide additional factual information, further evidence of progress, and to deal with decisions of greater significance. The Extension worker need not fear that as lay leadership

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17 Robert Dolan and Dick Smith, Leader Development Through Planning (Mimeo, North Carolian Atate Univ., 1966) p. 13.

assumes more responsibility, he will become less important. He should be sure, however, that responsibilities continue to be well defined and that he performs at a higher level of proficiency. As lay leaders participate changes will occur in their attitudes, knowledge and skills. They will contribute more as influential leaders in their respective communities because they are more aware of the factors that influence social and economic conditions. They will also have a greater appreciation for the contribution of the Extension Service.[18]

The foregoing means that the Extension staff must plan and work at utilizing the Agricultural Committee, particularly, as related to making the four meetings per year effective. We should however be cognizant of King's thinking. In discussing how to plan the committee meeting he mentions the cliche "Watch the baby's weight carefully, but not too carefully." Similar advice is wise for those planning committee meetings or agendas. Most meetings, however, suffer from insufficient planning. It is possible to be so interested in getting matters settled within a certain time span that we devote little time to how the matters were settled. Settlements under these conditions can become mere formalities and mean little except on routine items. Settlement of weighty matters handled in this manner can come back to

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[18]Heckel, op. cit., pp. 87-94.

haunt one.[19] According to King "a committee is like a garden. You have to feed it to raise what you want out of it."[20]

We should be aware that such a model for utilizing leaders as outlined presents a challenge to the Extension Staff. Sabrosky says, and now comes another challenge to professional workers. You cannot stop your own professional improvement as you move leaders along with you. You need to stay ahead of them. Effective local leaders will find their work satisfying only when their professional leader helps them with bigger and more difficult problems.[21]

In summary the Extension Staff must work at utilizing the county committee. It will not be effectively used otherwise. Growth needs of the committee as a group and of committee members as individuals should be studied, noted and used as a basis for utilizing the committee. These growth needs should be fitted into or made a part of accomplishing the committee's purposes as set out by law.The four meetings per year should be held with one major area of the Extension program receiving emphasis at each meeting. The committee should adopt an "umbrella" approach to program formulation and execution. Detailed planning should be left to committees with a more micro view. Committee members should be used on micro program planning and execution commities in line with their interests. They should also be

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[19]Clarence King, Your Committee in Community Action (New York:Harper Brothers,1952) pp. 46-58.

[20]Ibid., p.101.

[21]Laurel E. Sabrosky,"Role of the Agent in Leader Training," Journal Cooperative Extension, Spring 1963, p. 7.

used in presiding at Extension meetings of appropriate kinds, presenting recognition awards and telling the Extension story. One word of caution; inherent in the concept of utilization of leaders is the idea that leaders are involved in decision making including planning, executing and evaluating programs. Also inherent is the concept that the leader of leaders must supply direction; the degree and amount of such direction is dependent on the state of the leader or group of leaders. Thus do not be guilty of over scheduling or over directing on the one hand or doing little or under-directing on the other, A plan for utilizing the committee is a guideline and will need adjustment depending on the situation.

RECOGNITION

Recognition as are all the phases of the leadership development process is continuous. It has been implied throughout the other phases. Meaningful and challenging use of committee members is one of the best forms of recognition. Needs of the individual member and of the committee as a group should be considered in determining use of the committee. Deserved praise by word of mouth or by letter is another effective means of recognition. Announcement in news media of appointment of new committee members is recognition.Retiring committee members should be recognized for their contributions. In most cases this should be done in regularly scheduled committee meetings and by informal

verbal communication.

In summary recognition of committee members should be a part of the routine of committee work. It should be relatively low key and include public announcement through news media of appointment of new members, verbal recognition of a job well done, personal letters when appropriate recognizing service, and challenging use of committee members in the many faceted phases of program planning, execution and evaluation.

EVALUATION

The chart on the next page is adapted from Houle and may be used by the Extension Leader in evaluating the effectiveness of the County Agricultural Extension Committee. We should remember that any poor ratings are as much our responsibility to correct as they are the committee's responsibility.

CONCLUSION

Blalock commenting on the results of a North Carolina study states Extension needs to exert positive efforts aimed at improving legislators' and the general public's understanding of its organization and programs. Results of this study indicate that, in general, legislators are unaware of many of Extension's accomplishments. As the percentage of legislators associated with agriculture decreases, this need

A RATING SCALE FOR COMMITTEES**

	1	2	3	4	5 *
1. The committee should be made up of effective persons who can supplement one another' talents					
2. The committee should represent the interests which are relavent to the Extension Program					
3. The functions and purposes of the committee should be clearly delineated					
4. The working relationship between the staff and the committee should be effective					
5. Board members should understand the objectives of the Extension Service and how activities carried out accomplish these objectives					
6. The committee should have a feeling of social ease and rapport					
7. Each committee member should feel involved and interested in its work					
8. The committee should have a sense of progress and accomplishment					
9. The committee should be balanced relative to age, geography, and program interest					

*1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Average
4. Poor
5. Very Poor

**Houle op. cit., p. 172.

will increase.[22]

A functioning and well utilized Agricultural Extension Committee can help to inform the general public (inside and outside the county) concerning Extension's organization, purposes, and accomplishments. In addition Extension's purposes will be more effectively accomplished by involvement of the County Agricultural Extension Committee.

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[22]T. C. Blalock, "What Legislators Think of Extension", Journal Cooperative Extension, Summer 1964, p. 81.

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